The debate betweene *Pride and Lowlines*, pleaded to an issue in Assise:

And hovve a Jurie vvith great indifferencie being impannelled, and redy to haue geuen their verdict, were straungely intercepted, no lesse pleasant then profitable.

F. T.

O taste and see hovv gratious the Lord is, Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Seene, and allowed.

Imprinted at London by John Charlwood, for Rafe Newbery, dwelling in Fleetestrete a litle aboue the Condite.

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To the godly and gentle Reader.

THou haſt (good Reader) in this ſhort volume
Sum matters that to thee may ſeeme vncooth:
As ſpeach, to things improper, made commune,
But yet marke thon if what they ſay bee ſooth.

And if thou finde it ſo haue thou no ſcorn,
Therof, for their vnlikelines that ſpake:
For euident it is long heretoforn,
Chriſt ſaid the ſtones ſhould ſpeaken for his ſake.

I could proue if me liſt to ſtand thereon,
Such maner ſpeaking not to be ſo newe:
As that they haue not been right long agon,
Sometime admitted, but ſometime very true.

For Balams Aſſe did ſpeake in very deede,
And him reproued for his couetiſe:
That went to curſen Iſrael for meede,
VVhich cauſed him to chaungen his aduiſe.

Reade we not of a horne that did blaſpheme,
The name of God through pride and arrogance:
Yet of his woords and ſpeach who did miſdeeme,
Or ſought not rather their ſignifiance.

The Preface.

Haue therefore (gentle Reader) in good part,
This litle volume wherin thou maieſt finde:
Some matters (though not pullished with art,)
To make thee laugh and recreate thy minde.

If other matter it may yeelden thee,
As morall counſel, whereby thou may lerne:
VVhat thinges are good to folowe, what to flee,
Then thanke me when we meeten at the terme.

And pray God bleſſe our Queene and Conntrey,
And graunt her long to raigne and proſperous:
And to vs all after this iourney,
In heauen with him ſelfe a dwelling houſe.

betweene Pride and Lowlines.

MEN talken diuerſly concernyng dreames,
Some ſay they come of cauſes naturall:
Of cholers, melancholies, blod, and fleames,
And bæn ſuch as their cauſe materiall.

Some ſay they come of ſuperfluitie,
That any wight hath take of meate or drinke:
Engendring in the head fumoſitie,
Whyle thyther frõ the ſtomake they doo ſwynk.

And therefore doo diſtinguiſhe of the time,
When they appeare, yf in the latter ſlæpe:
The more remarkable they them deſine.
If in the fyrſt they take the leſſer keepe.

Some holden that they come of loue or feare,
Which any wight by day time hath icaught:
To thing or place, and wiſheth to be there,
And this is dæpe imprinted in the thought.

And ſo ſayth Cato in his litle booke,
And therewith dooth their credit ellenate:
As thing whereof, but ſmall regard he tooke,
All for the cauſe ye heard me tell of late.

Others them holden ſignificatife,
Of trueth not to be vily pended:
As meſſages to men of death or life,
Howe things begon are likely to be ended.

Now whether this come of perfection,
Which God hath geuen to the soule of man:
Such prouidence and such direction,
By proper kynde when he him first began.

We thinke to iudge so were arrogance,
As from the deitie to derogate:
And man aboue his qualitie aduaunce,
So making him forgetten his estate.

And as it were a man to deifie,
And to such matters him to intromit:
Whereof our God alone hath propertie,
But as him pleaseth to reuealen it.

And shewe to man by reuelation,
Some matter straunge that he hath purposed:
It were great wrong and vsurpation,
To say that mans wit had it forwarned.

For proofe doth shew that it is otherwyse,
Namely for that we can not reade aryght:
Theffect of them, ne in our hart compryse.
Except that God haue put it in our might.

And that by gyft and grace especiall,
Such as he hath, but geuen vnto fewe:
Who grew in princes fauours therewithal,
For they such secrete matters couthe shewe.

As

As Joseph did to Pharao as we reade,
And Daniel to Nabuchodonosor:
Whose dreames were frightful & of myckel dreade.
Therefore I thinke as I haue sayd before.

That such bẽ rare and very special!,
And vnto such as God before doth warne:
Of his intent, and things that wyl befall,
Concerning dearth or cheape, goodnesse or harme.

This gather I by Saul in holy booke,
Now fallen into miseries extreame:
Ye dœmed that of God he was forsooke,
For he appeared not to him in dreame.

Ne other vision as saith the storie,
Wherefore he thought his life in distresse:
But yet for to relieue his hart full sorie,
He asked counsel at the Phitonesse.

As in that booke is to be read at length,
And many a matter after and before:
Concerning dreames, their vertue & their strength
Thereofas nowe ye get of me no more.

But thus much I haue said for this respect
That dreames though some be vaine & of no force
Yet are there some that bringen their effect,
And would of men be waied any remors.

Now hauing oft ſpoken of their efficacie,
And of their cauſe as much as I can tell:
From thence to other matters I wyll paſſe,
To ſhewe not long agoe what me befell.

And namely in this moneth of May,
The time I dow remember very well:
For it was iuſt vpon the ſixtenth day,
And eyght a clock had rong S. Pulchres bell.

Wée thought the weather was not very calme,
For it had raigned al the day before:
Wherefore I toke my booke and red a Pſalme,
And bad my hoſt good night vntil the morne

So when I had mée ſhrowded in my bed,
And thanked God for graces manifold:
Full ſone had ſléepe caught mée by the head,
And Straightly with his armes he can me fold.

This pleaſaunt ſleepe, this gentle creature,
Nurs of diſgeſtion to man and beaſt:
Without en whom none of both can endure,
Of no degrée from greateſt to the leaſt.

But now to tellen thée my chéefe purpoſe,
That hath mée cauſed all this thing to wrote:
And orderly the ſame for to diſcloſe,
And all the circumſtances to endite.

By

By that time I had slept an houre or lesse,
I gan to dreame so wonderfull and straunge:
As but a fewe haue done before I gesse,
Ne yet in slæpe so farre dyd euer raunge.

Mée thought that I was walking in a Parke,
Amyd the woddes among the pleasaunt leaues:
Where many was the bird did swætly carpe,
Emong the thornes, the bushes, and the greues.

Whiche in my hart dyd kindle such desyre,
To heare their songes, their myrth, and melodie:
So chaungeable as no hart could require,
That sodenly mée thought, Lord where am I.

Besides the stately trées which to behold,
With bodyes straight vpryght and of such length:
As skant ye would belæue mée yf I told,
Ne of their bulke for timber and their strength.

By that time I had walked there a whyle,
About a quarter of an houre forthright:
I thinke a litle more then halfe a mile,
Of pleasaunt fælds I gan to haue a sight.

So paynted and so coloured I wéene,
As by her leaue, and with her pacience:
Was Floras land, that fresh & lusty quéene,
Ne with such verdure, and such redolence.

This (may ye thinke) me seemed very straunge,
And so it dyd, I put you out of doubt:
I could not satisfie mee selfe to raunge,
These pleasaunt fields, & medowes round about.

Till at the last I came into a dale,
Amid two mighty hils on eyther side:
From whence a sweete streame downe dyd auale,
And cleare as Christal through the same did slide.

Whiche to behold I had such great pleasure,
That power had I none from thence to goe:
Considered also that I had leasure,
And in such place had neuer bin or thoe.

Till at the last as I stood by this brooke,
And on these matters mused in my minde:
I chaunced vp the hil to cast my looke,
If happyly some people I might finde.

And sodenly mee thought I had espied,
A thing come downe the hillward toward me:
But not on foote, ne yet on horse dyd ryde,
Which mee thought very strange there for to see.

And it beheld with full and whole intent,
Howe downeward al at ease it held the way:
I mused not a litle what it ment,
When of the hill it passed had the sway.

I did perceyue then what it was in deede,
That is to weete a goodly veluet breech:
Which in it furniture dyd so exceede,
As hardly shal ye finde yt that ye seech.

For it was all of veluet very fine,
The neather stockes of pure Granado silke:
Such as came neuer vpon legges of myne,
Their coller cleane contrary vnto mylke.

This breech was paned in the fayrest wyse,
And with right satten very costly lyned:
Embrodered according to the guise,
With golden lace ful craftely engined.

So when they were come downe beneath the hill,
Into the valley whereas I dyd stand:
I them beheld and loked on my fill,
But nold somuch as touche them with my hand.

For strange mée thought frõ whence they shoulde (be
Some body wyl come after them anone:
Wherefore I wyl attende (thought I) to see,
For wonder is it such things bee alone.

Then to that other hill I cast myne eye,
Whyle I was musing as I haue ye told:
And sodenly (mée thought) I dyd espie,
That euen as the veluet breeches rold.

Thei

There came another paire, but softer pase,
And neuer ceased rolling tyll they came:
Into the dale, and there had taken place,
Now listen, for me thought this litle game.

These breches I did bound on eyther side,
As one that was in middle them betweene:
These last were but of cloth withouten pride,
And stitche ne gard vpon them was to seene.

Of cloth (I say) both vpper stocke and neather,
Paned and single lyned nert to the thie:
Light for thee were, meete for al sort of weather,
Nowe paraduenture ye wyl thinke I lye.

Then velvet breeches dyd begyn to say,
To them of cloth, as ye shall after here:
But lest ye maruayle how and by what way,
These things dyd speake, that neuer speaken ere.

Ye wot it is a dreame that I you tell,
Whose demonstrations are very darke:
And yet vnto the truth accorden well,
Admitted as they must be, therefore harke.

The dreame of seuen blasted eares of corne,
Which Pharao the kyng saw whyle he slept:
Deuoure the seuen good eares them before,
Were straunge as this, yet their promise kept.

And

And eke the seuen kine that were so leane
And euyl fauoured as they might bée:
The seuen fat kyne dyd eate vp cleane,
What likely hood of trueth was there to sée.

And many other thinges that séeme vntrue,
In figures, and in vncooth termes of speache:
Haue béen and wyl, this matter is not newe,
For diners béen the wayes and meanes to teache.

Wherefore to turne agayne where I dyd leaue,
And of my dreame the whole effect to tell:
In naked woordes and easie to perceiue,
And euery thing and matter as they fell.

Vp stoode this veluet bréeche of which I sayde,
And spake to them of cloth in great disdayne:
Thou bréeche of cloth, how art thou not afrayde,
Of our displeasure to incurre the payne.

That hast presumed here to take thy place,
Without regard of vs or reuerence:
But as it were to berd vs and to face,
I hold it best for thee to get thee hence.

The other at these woordes was not afeard,
Ne chaunged collour ne yet countenaunce:
And at the last to this effect answeard.
Great were thy pride, yf thou had suffisaunce.

I ſée betwéene vs litle difference.
Or none at all, ſaue only workmanſhip:
Whereto yf there belong præeminence,
Make thou no claime to thy miſtres worſhip.

I meane the workman which thée garniſhed,
With ſilke and golde, and with imbroderie:
By meane whereof Pride hath thée rauiſhed,
To boſt in things belonging not to thée.

This moued not the beluet breech a lit,
Thou beggers wæde (quoth he) baſe and villayn:
Ill can I take at thy hand ſuch deſpit,
And that to dowe thée force I mée refrayn.

How dare thou ſpeake ſuch language vnto mée,
Thy better, and thy ſeife with me compare:
So farre inferiour in eche degrée,
As they that nére vs both, witneſſes are.

Beſides that, I was borne in Italy,
Sometime the miſtres of the world ſo wide:
Famous in learning and chiualry,
As in this world there hath bén none beſide.

Beſides all that, my foote is worth thy yard,
So am I iolif fayre and precious:
Where I am preſent, who doth thée regard,
Or thée vouchſafe to dwellen in his houſe.

I

I let him in, for thee might ſtand without,
Am bidde ſpeake, when thou muſt hold thy peace:
And many a matter dayly bring about,
To hard for thee, therefore I redd thee ceaſe.

Nowe ſure this gere is paſſing ſtrange thought I,
What (trow I) wil become betweene theſe twayn
With that the breech of cloth gan to replie,
And thus began his ſentence for to ſaien.

Whereas thou ſayeſt I am inferiour,
And vnto thee am nothing comparable:
For thou doeſt ſerue the riche, and I the poore,
That reaſon is both fals and deceauable.

For yf that verture and humanitie,
Were tyed to riches or appropriate:
As Pride and vices are moſt commonly.
Then I nold in this caſe with thee debate.

But ſith apparell doth not him amend,
That weareth it according to the coſt:
But only helpeth to conſume and ſpend,
The more is layd on thee, the more is loſt.

And where thou ſayeſt thou art of Italy,
Borne and bred in that noble region:
Why liveſt thou not at home in thy country,
Woe worth him brought thee firſt to Albion.

With hi

Which nowe of vs is called England.
Where sometime I haue couered the best:
And such as then were thought to vnderstand,
Whose lyfe and maners vices did detest.

For in thy countrey were thou not alone,
Ne hast bẽn euer sithe thy dwellyng here:
But art with many a vice wayted vpon,
Which dow and haue done this land mickle dére.

As for the learning and the chiualrie,
Wherein thy countrey thou dost so commend:
About thy comming into that country,
Of both their dwelling there they made an end.

And lost the diademe imperiall,
Ne can it hold as their forefathers dyd:
Loe what thou hast to bosten thee withall,
They lost the landes their fathers conquerid.

Whereas thou sayest thy fote is wooꝛth my yard,
That is vntrue, saue that for argument:
Thinges are to man as he doth them regard,
And other reason none to myne intent.

Whereas thou sayest that in thy presence,
I am of no regarde ne countenaunce:
That is a lye sauing your reuerence,
Though with the fooles it often so doo chaunce.

With

With that the velvet breeches as me thought,
Began toward the other fast to roll:
And surely but for me they would have fought,
So I was faine the matter to controll.

And spake vnto them both as ye shall heere,
At least as I my selfe imagined:
Nay frend (quoth I) ye shall do him no deere,
But eche of them ware other should be dead.

Not so (quoth I) I know a better way,
And more indifferent vnto you bothe:
For when ye have done eyther what ye may,
Ye must be ruled be ye lefe or lothe.

For here ye dwellen in a lande of peace,
And vnder lawes, and vnder Magistrate:
God graunt them in his graces to encrease,
That enden will full iustly your debate.

And I my selfe for better was in place,
Though for my learnyng farre vnworthy:
Towards the lawe these long xv. yeres space,
And thereof sworne to be an atturney.

If I may please er you with my service,
I am yours to commaund right as ye list:
For doubt in lawe ye shall have myne advise,
Till better come that wyl therein assist.

For that I see the matter is not small,
Ne yet no trifle wherefore ye contend:
One would fayne haue his owne, the other all,
And herevpon the matter doth depend.

The one him bosteth of his worthynesse,
And of his natiue soyle where he was borne:
And how that he hath rowm in throng and presse,
Because that of the wealthy he is worne.

The other sayth he is this countrey man,
Here hath he dwelt and here led all his lyfe:
And here wyll dwell say thother what he can,
Nowe for to end all this debate and strife.

And both your mindes therein to satisfy,
The best is all your quarell and complaint:
To haue heard and debated orderly,
And eche man tell his tall without restraint.

But howe so ye your selues doo esteeme,
Ye are not Judges thereof nor shalbe:
But twelue, or foure & twentie shal it deeme,
And this is reasonable thynketh me.

To tell your price and vertues ye haue leaue,
And your effectes, your causes and your end:
Which their well vnderstood wyl not deceaue,
Nor suffer vs to erre as I entend.

And

And for you veluet breches finde ye greeued,
And of this clothen breech to haue had wrong:
Ye may seeke orderly to be relieued,
So wyll I doo (quoth he) or it be long.

And make him yeld to myne obeysaunce,
And to confesse that he hath nothing here:
But only at my wyll and sufferaunce,
As I doubt not it plainely shall appere.

The other saide, as for obeysaunce,
Ye ought him none homage ne fealtie:
All were his lookes bigge and his countenaunce,
And frendshyp great, all that ne doubted hee.

His cause was good, his title auncestrell,
For in this Countrey was he borne and bred:
And but yf lawe sayd nay, here would he dwel,
So then vnto them both I answeared.

Sith eche of you doth thinke he hath a right,
And for to trye the same ye are so bent:
Declare and bring your title into light.
Trespasse or disseison of franke tenement.

And shewe your title and whence ye derive it.
And yf ye thinke this good ye veluet breche:
The clothe shall pleade ye non dissesimit,
And thus without long circumstaunce of speeche.

Upon this issue ye haue libertie,
For proofe that he hath done ye displeason:
To alledge what so ye can bethinke ye,
And therein at our handes to aske for reason.

Ye answerd, to be plentiffe in thassise,
Ye thought not good, ne ment not so to be:
And that it was not good I dyd aduise,
A Jury may be perciall (quoth he.)

For I am worthyer by muche then he,
For many causes that I can alledge:
But yf they wyll seeme suche to the Countrie,
I doubt, or of them yf they wyl take knowledge.

For I am here a straunger in this lande,
And saue of late yeeres of small acquayntaunce:
The common people dooth not vnderstand,
My worthynesse, estate, ne countenaunce.

My aduersarie is their countrey man,
And is not so chargeable vnto them:
Therefore wyll they doo for him what they can,
But yf they were of Towne and Citizen.

For of the byndes or of the payssauntie,
I feare I should not haue indifferents:
For I know they beare no good wyll to me,
Because my freendes their purses often rents.

This doubt is vaine thereof assure yée,
(Quoth I) for whom ye thinke not indifferent:
Ye may may him chalenge from your Jury,
And shewe your cause why from him ye dissent.

And as that cause shall séeme allowable,
By proofe or reason that ye for it make:
It shalbe holden acceptable,
Thereafter to receyue or to forsake.

Goe forth therefore as ye began in order,
Untill ye come to matter issuable:
Of all the which I shalbe the recorder,
And howe so it shalbe determinable.

To wit by Jury or by iudgement,
I shall direct you by my skill:
And to you both shalbe indifferent,
Nowe haue I sayd, trucke me yf ye wyll.

Your wordes (quoth he) doth sound to reason,
So I may haue my cause heard all at large:
Let him pleade me null ne tort null disseison,
Enter my pleas wherewith I wyll him charge.

For I am sure they wylbe sumwhat long,
And so the Jury gladly wyl mée take:
Or leaue some of my plea to doo me wrong,
The other partie would it not forsake.

But pleaded him the issue generall.
And prayed as the other prayed before:
To enter his matter especiall,
One thing the veluet breches moued more.

For who shall iudge our chalenges (quoth he)
I answeard, yf it fall in learning, I:
If not, ye shall haue triers two or three,
That shall iudge of their indifferencie,

I am content (quoth he) my chalenge saued,
My matter shalbe tryed by thassise:
It is but right (quoth I) that ye haue craued,
And forth they went, as I shall you deuise.

I meane the breche of cloth in his replie,
And toke his holde agayne whereas he left:
Whereas thou sayest thou canst do more then I,
I knowe great is thy subteltie and craft.

To let one in, where I can not do so,
And speake where I am bidden hold my peace:
Full many a wight that worketh mikell wo,
When of their farme expired is their lease.

In penall statute and concealed land,
For so thou tearmest it for thyne encreas:
Full hardly can the poore escape thy hand.
That they ne finde thy lampe both oyle & greas.

Thus

THus haue I answered (quoth he) thine argumēt,
From point to point, that hast thou not (qd. he:)
With that I loked vp and had a glent,
Of one that came toward vs leasurely.

Soft then (quoth I) ye be at a good point,
Your pleas and answears I haue fully hard.
Perchaunce an issue hereon may be ioynt,
Whereon thassise forthwith we may award.

And here me thinke doth come a gentleman,
Whom if ye thinke as I haue thought it best:
We wyll entreate by all the meanes we can,
That he wyll be the foreman of the quest.

Gladly quoth one, with good wyl quoth the other,
By, then he was come nære, and bad god spæde,
And we againe sayd, welcome gentle brother,
Piked he was and handsome in his wæde.

A faire blacke coate of cloth withouten sleue,
And buttoned the shoulder round about:
Of .xx.s. a yard as I beleeue,
And layd vpon with parchment lace without.

His dublet was of Sattin very fine,
And it was cut and stitched very thick:
Of silke it had a costly enterlyne.
His shirt had bands and ruffe of pure Cambrick.

His vpper stockes of sylken Grogerane,
And to his hippes they sate full close and trym,
And laced very costly euery pane,
Their lyning was of Satten as I wyn.

His neather stockes of silke accordingly,
A veluet gyrdle rounde about his wast:
This knight or squyre what so he be (quoth I,)
We wyll empannell, let him not goe past.

He condiscended sone to our request,
Then I beholding him aduisedly:
Sawe where a nædle sticked on his brest,
And at the same a blacke thræd hanging by.

So then I asked him of his estate,
He said he was a Taylour by his art:
All in good time (quoth I) here is debate,
Which to appease I pray you dw your part.

Here is a matter pleaded to enquest,
Wherein it may please you to take some paine:
Your wysedome may directen all the rest,
I shall ye read it, euident and plaine.

I challenge him then saith the clothen bræche,
Why so (quoth I) doth he not make you both:
What then, his gayne by vs is not alæche,
Quoth he, and therewithal he swore an oath.

Ye gayneth moze by byeng silke and lase,
Of golde and siluer and such trumperie:
To welt, to edge, to garde, to stitche and face,
By one of these, then .xb. payze of mee.

In making mee, there is no gaine but one,
Which is, foz labour and foz wozkmanship:
Except sometime a peece of cloth come home,
As yf that by mischaunce the shere did slip.

Nowe is that trade become a marchandice,
Wherein sith pzide in peoples harts doth raigne:
So great hath been and is his exercise,
That only God doth knowe what is his gaine.

And howe, though he thereof do litle reck,
So that to setten downe a bill of charge:
There is no Auditoz, ne Clarke of Check,
Can penne it bett then he, ne moze at large.

So that I doubt of his indifference,
As in that tryall here betweene vs twayne:
Lest foz him he would straine his conscience,
I see this wozlde is set to folowe gayne.

I Sayd, all this might come of good intent,
And foz to punishe pzide as he was able:
Then were no reason foz it he were shent,
Foz he nys Officer, ne Constable.

For otherwyse set in auctheritie,
To execute the statute of aurai:
Then how to punishe them supposeth he,
The best meane for their pride to make them pay.

And aske for silke, for lase, and other stuffe,
To face and lyne without side and within:
Twyse as much at the least as were inoffe,
And kæpe the third part, and the rest put in.

And reache them with a bill of reckening.
Shal make them scrat wheras it itcheth nought:
If this may be a necessarie thing,
Then of this chalenge well aduise we ought.

For although som through pride thus down are cast
And waste their liuing that their frænds thẽ laft:
Yet others by their meanes aryse as fast,
Som by their cunning, & some by their craft.

Wherefore the cause shalben examined,
By tryors whom we wyll chose for that end:
To try them or they bæn empanelled,
They were content both, and did condiscend.

Wherefore I prayed hym to stand a side.
And watche yf any other cam that way:
Lest of vs they escaped vnespied,
Ye was contented with all that I dyd say.

With

With that the veluet breeches bad me staien,
Our issue is not perfect yet (quoth he:)
I haue much other matter for to saien,
Say on (quoth I) you haue good libertie.

With that he gan to stretchen and to stare,
And sayd that he dyd suffer villany:
That such a Caytiue should with him compare.
A Carters waede, and meete for husbandry.

For who would set his sonne to schoole quoth he,
To studie scripture, phisicke, or the lawe:
But that he beareth good wyll vnto me,
If otherwyse I hold him but a dawe.

Sayeth not the prouerbe, honors noryshe artes,
Why trotten men so farre for marchandise:
Who hath the credite at the faires and martes.
Not he that commeth in a coate of fryse.

What man or ladde is he that were not loth.
In youth to trauell, and to faren harde:
If he ne purposed to weare but cloth.
In time to come, nor further dyd regarde.

Hence rysen learned men in eche estate,
Connyng in handy craft and facultie:
And getten dignities of doctorate,
Who is their marke, what shot they at but me.

I am the roote, thoziginal of lawes,
Whose learned maſtes holden are in pzice:
Unto the ſimple folke I am the cauſe.
That many a foole and dolt is holden wyſe.

Who doth ſo ſharpen cozrection as I,
Upon all ſuch as done the lawes offend:
If thereto be annexed penalty,
Of money that to mee thence may deſcend.

That this is true and may not be denyed,
I wyll auerte, and yf he it gayne ſay,
I am content by verdict it be tryed.
Then ſpake the bzæch of cloth without delay.

PRotecting alwayes that he dyd not iudge,
Man, maide, ne wyſe by their array:
Ne yet much leſſe that euer he dyd grudge.
Obſeruing comelineſſe yf they were gay.

Namely, the circumſtaunces obſerued.
The birth, the time, the place, oz dignitie:
Who hath of Pzince oz common wealth deſerued,
His wæde of right may anſwear his degree.

Which matters although they bèn to allow,
With comelineſſe foz good and toilerable:
Yet who (ſayth Chziſt) him ſelfe doth mæke e low,
Exalted ſhal he be and acceptable.

Example

Example he did make him selfe herein,
Who thinking it no wrong ne robberie:
With God the father equall for to byn,
Was here in earth in all simplicitie.

But for to followe him it were to muche,
Or John the Baptist with his coate of here:
Yet may we shewe our selues to be suche,
As more esteeme our bodyes then our gere.

Namely our soules whiche are celestiall,
Whose braue apparell and whose ornament:
Whose diademe and crowne imperiall,
Is hart that seeketh God with whole intent.

But to the point, and for plea to the matter.
Alledged for thy commendation,
As they arysen this is myne answer,
And fyrst thy vayne imagination.

That thou art cause, that thou art finall end.
Of learning, I ne thinke thee to be so:
And that thou were, the living God defend,
For sure thou were not in principio.

Nor art among the godly at this day,
Though with a number, I thinke it be true:
No litle vnto vertues ruine and decay,
Where it is so, the godly own it rue.

For where thou sayest, honor doth norishe art,
True honour I suppose thou neuer knewe:
That iudgest it in arrogance of hart,
In silke and veluet, and in outward shewe.

The very baightes and lures of Satanas,
Who for thy sake was throwen out of heauen:
For the Nabuchodonosor eat grasse,
And fed with Oxen well nigh yeres seuen.

Which is the honor man hath for thy sake,
Hath bēn and is and euermore shalbe:
Who Idols of their carcasses doe make,
Through foule presumption and vanitie.

For he that thorow learning seketh port,
Ne maketh other purpose of the same:
His learning puffeth him in such a sort,
That oft in sted of honor he hath shame.

NOwe for the marchaunt and his marchaundise,
His credite in his mart and cheuisaunce:
Thou geuest him to seme both riche and wyse,
Where through he bringeth many to mischance.

Of this me nedeth litle for to speake,
Sith I could know a peny from a grote:
I knewe not many forced for to breake,
If Pride ne made him or his wyfe a coate.

And where thou sayest that man or boy were loth,
In youth to trauell and to faren hard:
Yes sure & God, there are that haue done both,
And onely heauen hoped for reward.

As for this world and her fickle glory.
They haue estéemed it a thyng of nought:
And for their neighbour, fréend, and territory,
Imployed haue their studie, care, and thought.

I could reherse the stories many a one,
Of Greekes and Romanes that are memorable:
Though wormes some eat, their flesh so long agon,
Yet are their names accompted venerable.

But I nyl stay to recken them as nowe.
How some arosen vnto counselshyp:
And thereto weren called from the plow,
Whē they thought nothing lesse then mastership.

So that of worship I doe distinguishe,
Some seeken it, and some of it are sought:
And those are such as nothing lesse doo wishe,
Some thinke with golde and siluer it is bought.

Which maketh offices beare such a price,
And that so gréedely they béen icaught:
Before thy time men were not halfe so wyse,
As sythen in thy schoole they haue béen taught.

To bye and sellen offices for gaine,
No question made of his woorthynesse:
That shall them haue, but yf he may not paien,
How so he powle and pill for his redresse.

Then which of these thrée (for there is but one)
Woorshyp in déede, and of right venerable:
To vertue freend. to vice a deadly fone,
I shall you tell as néere as I am able.

The one dooth begge an office, to what end,
For there are two as it is euident:
Theffect wyll shewe whereto he dooth it bend.
His chaunge of chéere, and eke his gouernment,

The other byeth, payeth déere therefore,
His meaning may be good, possible it is:
But (by your leaue) twise as vnlike and more,
And yet no rule so sure but it may misse.

The thirde is called vtterly vnwitting,
For whom spake neither siluer, golde, ne fréend:
Thrise happy countrey where suche are sitting,
Whom grace and vertue only doon commend.

For there are trueth and mercie met togeather,
And thither looketh ryghteousnesse from heauen:
All were they cloth or veluet choose them whether,
For pride ne shal their wits from them bereuen.

That

That thou art cause of art and faculty.
Of handy craft which may not be forgon:
Pride found them not first but necessity,
In deede thou hast corrupted them eche one.

And caused them to been adulterate,
And chaunged cleane into another guise:
Deceipt a Journeyman with eche estate,
Through whom they waren riche, & sermen wyse.

Which whyle I was in favour might not be,
The father was contented that his sonne:
Should leade a lyfe such as before did he,
And end in such estate as he begon.

Unto the which small thing is requisite,
I meane a godly minde to satisfie:
Whereas to vanitie and foule delite,
And Pride I dare affirme the contrary.

To wyt, he waſteth much vnorderly,
And of his cost and charge so small purpose:
That of the good fewe faren bett thereby,
For it is spent on vertues vtter foes.

As dayly is to see who lyst to looke,
The Usurer and eke Thertorcioner:
Full sure they are, his name is in their booke,
Untill his house and land be come to their.

Then come deuises, many a shamefull shift,
To begge, to borowe, and to deceiue their frend:
And many another lewde and preuie lyft,
Tyll lastly foule and shamefull is the end:

And where thou sayest thou art a punisher,
Of sinne, it is full true I doo confesse:
As thou hast sayd, and in such forme order,
Which is to robbe, to ranishe, and oppresse.

And so farre from all colour to doo good,
And further I dare safely undertake:
Then deuils to cast out through Beelzebub,
No truer glose of that text can I make.

Here are thy fruites by whiche (as Christ doth say)
The tree is knowen for good or ill therefore:
Of all these presence, iudgement I dow pray,
And that I may haue right I aske no more.

Nought seke I for, superioritie,
No thing of thyne, ne of none other man:
To hold myne owne if I haue libertie,
Though it be small right well content I am.

With that I gan to speake vnto them both,
Is this the effect of all ye haue to say:
Ye here is all then answeared he of cloth,
The other held his peace, & sayd not nay.

Your matters are iregestred quoth I,
Euery plea and euery argument:
Here is a paper witnesse wyll not lye,
Nowe hearken if it pleas you myne intent.

Ye are nowe come to matter issuable,
On eyther side as dooth appeare at large.
And many poyntes therein are inquirable,
Whereof the Iurie taken shall thee charge.

As I shall reade it to them orderly,
Wherefore vnto your chalenges be sure:
Ye take good heede, that blameleslie I may be.
Which must recorden here your procedure.

They answered me both, they were content,
With that me thought I heard a company:
That downe the hill vnto vs warde hem went.
And comming neere they dyd vs curtesy.

The formost weren three that went together,
And eke in cloakes they weren homely clad.
Both plaine and light according to the weather,
And in their gesture sober, wyse, and sad.

And Seruing men there wayted them vpon,
Comely arayed, and in number eleuen:
Fiue of the whiche were seruantes all to one,
A knight as after I dyd apperceyue n.

And namely, for they ware for cognisaunce,
A Peacock (as mee thought) without a tayle:
Not newe, ne yesterdayes remembraunce,
What ware the rest my memory doth faile.

I could haue told ye euen at that tyme,
For foure of them to one dyd apparteyne:
A squire of an auncient race and lyne,
And to thirde a gentleman, but twayne.

So when I salue them down vs curtesy,
And bidden vs with gentle woordes god spéede:
I answeard them agayne accordingly.
And forward in this cause I dyd procéede.

And tolde them what was fallen in debate,
Atwixt these pairs of cloth and veluet braches:
Concerning maintenance of their estate,
Their matters, allegations, and spæches.

And prayed them of their humanitie,
If they were such as verily they sæmed:
To wyt, of knighthood and gentle progeny,
By whom of right, such causes shoulde be dæmed.

As which concerned very gentilleſſe,
Wherein in it stant what is thereof the rote:
Ye shall ow God high seruice as I gesse,
And to your countrey men no litle bote.

The knight as he that gentle was of chéere,
He answeared his learning was but small:
But els herein his good wyll should appeere,
Then afterward I vp and tolde him all.

Howe that he should not bée alone him selue,
He should aboue his learning haue in charge:
For he should be the foreman of the twelue,
And of their matter should enquire at large.

And of such thinges as are in their knowledge,
And of which no man can be ignorannt:
That liueth on this earth, I dare alledge,
They were content all thrée, and didden graunt.

Then came there other company a pase,
By two and two togeather, thrée and thrée:
I sought to knowe some of them by their face,
But I ne might, ne gesse what they should be.

The fyrst thrée séemed for to béene of Towne,
For they were handsomely apparelled:
Erbe of them in a very séemely gowne,
The one a white knit cappe vpon his hed.

His coate was faced with graie Conie skinne,
I iudged him a baker by his trade:
As he confessed when I asked him,
For of his language nothing straunge he made.

Another was a Brucr by his art,
The third a Vitayler, and did retaile:
Bought by the barell, & sold by pinte & quart,
And had his liuing by that trauayle.

And were clothed after Citizen,
Neither in flouerie ne yet in pride:
Ne had they terme of inkhorne ne of penne,
But plaine in speache which gladly I espied.

And after them there came all in a rowt,
Thirteene or seuentene as I dyd gesse:
All likely men, and neither knaue ne lowt,
But cheefely two that came before the presse.

One of them had a fiddle in his hand,
And pleasaunt songes he played therevpon:
To queynt and hard for me to vnderstand,
If he were braue I make no question.

Or yf his furniture were for the daunce,
His breeches great, full of ventositie:
Deuised in the castle of playsaunce,
And master of a daunsing schole was he.

The other was by trade a Vintener,
That had full many a boggeshed loked in.
Trauayled he had and was a languager,
His face was redd as any Cherubyn.

A Spanishe cloke he ware fine with a cape.
A fine Frenche cappe on his head accordyng:
Both which vpon him faire and séemely sate,
And one his finger ware a mightie ring.

When they came néere, I asked what they were,
For nought said they so much as once god spéede:
But to my question said the Tauerner,
Answear they might, but therto lay no néede.

But told me at the last of their degrée,
As ye haue heard before then I them prayed:
If they were suche as they would séeme to be,
That in this matter we might haue their ayde.

Yet was there one whom I had nigh forgot,
And he was master of a dysing house:
No word had he, but pay the boxe and pot,
So braue he was, that mée thought marueylous.

The rest were people of the common sort,
Of whom I tooke no héede especiall:
Ne made enquirie of their liues or port,
Saue seuen of the whiche tell you I shall.

One of them ware a ierken made of buffe,
A mightie pouche of canuas at his belt:
Wherein me thought there séemed to be stuffe,
A faire cloke on his backe, & on his head a felt.

Upon his shoulder he bare a forrest Pyll,
I asked what he was, wherfore (quod he)
Aske ye: Friend (quod I) for none yll,
And told him as I told the rest perdye.

But he made aunswere farre from my purpose,
And asked me if I could tell of lease:
Of pasture that was to be set or close,
Now to beginne, or by some mans decease.

Or office if I wyst any to sell,
Ye had a sonne or twaine he would aduaunce:
And sayd they should take paines vntyll it fell,
Ye that wyll thriue (quod he) must tary chaunce.

And marchaunt tarye for the market daye,
On Gods name syr (quod I) yet saye full well:
Then what he was, he tolde without delaye,
To wytte a grasier, also where he dyd dwell.

Another was there much of his entaile,
Both for his gesture and his habilement:
His handes were stained, both the skyn and naile,
Full many peece of barke they hadden rent.

Ye was in very déede a ritche Tanner,
And asked where I thought he might purchase:
Som great domayn. som Lordship, or som maner,
But I rehersed to them both our case.

And

And tolde them that of Lordships I ne knewe,
For in such matters was inquisitiue:
Who bought, who sould, sir Richard, or sir Hew,
And from those purposes I dyd them driue.

Besides all these a Bricklayer there was,
A man right cunning in his faculitie:
Ye had hope build full many a statelye place,
A trewell at his gyrdle weared he.

And in his hand he had a flat measure,
Wrought with figures of Arithmetick,
Whereby his length and breath he toke full sure,
And wisely couched both his stone and brick.

Then was there yet another in a gowne,
Of fine blacke cloth, and faced faire with budge:
A blacke bagge from his girdle hung adowne,
And full it was, wherewith I could not iudge.

Ye gaue no worde, so much as once God spede,
I prayed him to tell vs what he was:
Why so (quod he) therein lyeth no nede,
I told him yes as thinges might come to passe.

I am then an informer answered he,
All in good time sir, and welcome quoth I:
For we haue nede of suche men as are ye,
We haue to fewe here of your faculitie.

That

That could informe vs of the right vppon,
A matter here before vs come to controuersed:
Here is none learned but if I be one,
And somwhat of the matter him rehersed.

He answered that his experience,
Was better then his learning a great deale:
Namely in the Statutes of penitence,
For in these and none others doth he deale.

Then was there yet another whom I see,
Which stode one of the hindmost of the route:
For soft and no whit forthputting was he,
Full sunburnt was his forehead and his snoute.

A man about a fiftie yeres of age,
Of Kendall very course his coate was made:
By thought of truth his face was an Image,
Upon his gyrdle hong a rustye blade.

Full simple was thereof both hast and sheath,
A strawen hatte he had vpon his head:
Vnder which his Chinne was fastened vnderneath,
His cheekes dyd shew he earned well his bread.

A payre of startvppes had he on his feete,
That lased were vp to the small of the legge:
Homelie they were, and easier then meete,
And in their soles full many a woodden pegge.

He

He had a shyrt of Canuas hard and tough,
Of which the band and ruffes were both of one:
So fyne that I might see his skinne them through,
Which is as much to say as he had none.

This was a husbandman, a simple hinde,
Whome when I called had, and had come neere:
And of the matter told him all my minde,
He aunswered with milde and gentle cheere.

Syr (quod he) gladlye would I down ye prowe,
If in this matter I had halfe the skyll:
That I haue in my harrow and my plowe,
I pray ye of my wordes, to thinke none yll.

I bad him not doubt therof, and told him more,
He should haue fellowship and assistence:
Lyke as ye had, ne tell the knight before:
And of the matter certen euidence.

Then was he well contented therewithall,
Lyke what is in my knowledge & my might:
Helpe you (quod he) with all my hart I shall,
Then on my matter further I gan me dight.

To make them full, then found I other mo,
A Shoemaker, a Weauer, and a Smith:
A Haberdasher of smale wares also,
Inow me thought to trie our matter with.

For

For I remember not the certaintie,
Of all the residue that weren there:
Their names, their science, and their facultie,
For haste also I nould of them enquere.

But these vnto my pannell dyd I wryte
And read their names, that euery man might here
And not full fowre and twentie names recite,
For sure I was twelue of them would appere.

Then spake the parties vnto me and sayd,
Them thought that som of these were chalēgable:
Whereof aduantage either of them prayd,
If any vpon cause they could disable.

Reason (quod I) that was agréed vpon before,
But who shall iudge and trye your challenges:
Your selfe (quod they) no sure (quod I) therfore
Appoint some other to that business.

Yea twoo or thrée thereto wyll scant suffice,
To iudge of them and theyr indifference:
For secréete cause of fauour maye arise.
Which must be searched which great aduertence.

By such as haue experience therein,
And of aduersitye haue had theyr part:
For who so beaten in the world hath bene,
No further nēde he take degrée of art,

With

With that they were content and dyd agrée.
To chose them tryers as I had thought méet:
I asked them how many, they sayde three,
In the name of God (quod I) so be it.

Howe did there in the place Arcadie stand
A woman well nigh fiftye yeres of age:
A young boye and a young wench at her hand,
Thinne was their weede and light their cariage.

The woman and the wenche were clad in russet,
Both course and olde, and worne so very neere:
That ye might see cleane through both slæue & gusset
The naked skinne whereas it dyd appeere.

Their hosen and their shoes were all of one,
I meane both for the workmanshyp and leather:
To wyt their skinnes, for other had they none,
And chapped were they sore with wind & weather.

With homely clouts I knitt vpon their head,
Simple, yet white as thing so course might be:
The boy much like them was apparelled,
For hose ne shoe vpon his foote had he.

With that I called them, and they came nere,
And bad god spæde and saue the company:
Then I did aske them, who and whence they were,
They answeared me of the North country.

In

In Comberland, as farre hence as Kendall,
And Copie holders were of tenant right:
I wotte not howe the Lordship they dyd call
But bold they dyd by seruice of a knight.

To serue the Prince at an howres warning,
And aske neither wages, fee, ne hyre:
Ne choise of time at midnight, or at morning,
All were it raine or shine, in durt and myre.

Nowe hath a churle (quod they) take it in lease,
To wytte the Lordshyp with the perquisite:
And for I we mought not pay our terme doth cease,
So our inheritaunce haue losten quite.

The company thought pitie this to heare,
Alas, quod I, this is great cruelty:
All gate I bad them all be of good cheare,
And praye to God to send you remedye.

And sith ye ben come hether at this time,
I wyll not let you stand in ydelnesse:
For ye shall haue the charge should haue ben mine,
And meete are ye that haue ben in distresse.

Which teacheth man to know the good from yll,
And eke to trye a true friend from a shrow:
Which vnto them that haue all thinges at wyll,
And line in welth is verye hard to know.

With

With that I vp and told them all the case,
Whereof before they hadden hard the chiefe:
And that of no small credite was the place,
Of truth and vertue for to maken pryef.

They all alledged theyr simplicitie,
So dyd the velnet breches them disable:
And of their choyse misliked vtterlye,
As them that were too vyle and miserable.

To iudge in causes of such importaunce,
For howe can it be possible (quod he)
But they ben lewd and of great iguoraunce,
And would in no case that it should so be.

The breche of clothe sayd, that it was not so.
They were right mæte the challenges to trye:
As symple folke were chosen long agoe,
To greater charge, but if the byble lye.

And is reserred to the multitude,
Who aunswered, they were not to refuse:
So therevppon we dydden all conclude.
Theyr seruice in this busines to vse.

WEll then widow, quod I, and fatherlesse,
Which both by god vnto vs are commended:
Haue good regard vnto this businesse,
Untyll that with your helpe we haue it ended.

For

For you can speake of your experience,
That ye haue sæne, felte, hard, and vnderstood:
And of the passed gather consequence,
And iudge betwæne the euill and the good.

And if it fall in reason to decide,
Vorall decrée or constitution:
My helpe and knowledge shall not be denide,
Untill we haue them tried one by one.

And sithe we be come this farre in the case,
As ye haue hard from present haue ye been:
And loked both the parties in the face,
That sharpe are set, as ye haue hard and sæne.

And specially the playntiue whom ye here,
his estymation how he doth hold:
And of him self how he accompteth deere.
So is his aduersarie partie bold.

And other wayes accompteth woorthynesse,
Besides alledgeth his antiquitie:
And that nought but his owne he would possesse,
Discended to him from his aunsestrie.

And for this cause we are assembled here,
My selfe, and all these others whom ye see:
To make this matter that is doubtfull cleere,
If God wyll therein, wyl graunt vs faculitie.

Therefore

Therefore as I shal reade their names eche one,
If eyther party chalenge any man:
And shew cause: ye are iudges therevpon,
Unto that cause to speaken what ye can.

And it alowe for good or otherwyse,
To disalow it in your iudgement:
Wherin I redd you that ye be precise,
And for the trueth to dw your good intent.

They answeared with all their harts they would,
Protesting their vnablenes of skil:
I bad them dw no more but what they could,
For God requireth of a man but wyl.

With that I read their names for to appere,
And fyrst the knight. the squire, and gentleman,
Who at the first made answear & sayd here,
Then to the rest to passen I began.

Fyrst, of the Taylours challeng made rehearsal,
And asked yf he were indifferent:
The tryors thought him not, and so dyd al
The rest, and therfore from vs we him sent.

Then gan I for to call the vitayler,
Ye answeared and ready was at hand:
The Baker, Brwer, and the Vintener,
Come nere (quoth I) & with your felowes stand.

Then to the Tanner and the Grasier,
Who answeared me both without delay:
The daunsing master and the Bricklayer,
I bad thinformer also come away.

The maister of the dysing house also,
The Smith, the Weauer, and the Husbandman:
And there I ceassed, and dyd call no mo.
But for to count their number I began.

And found the number of them iust sixtæne,
Nowe maisters (to the parties then saide I:)
Here is a Jury complet as I wæne,
Loke to your chalenges aduisedly.

And fyrst the knight I called to the booke,
Who had no sooner answeared thereto:
Then velvet bræches to him chalenge tooke,
And said he would shew cause, I bad hym do.

THis knight was neuer frænd of mine (quoth he,)
So plaine in his apparel and his port:
The godly he doth more estæme then me,
And spend his liuing on the poorer sort.

He lyueth very well content at home,
Nor to the Citie hath desyre to goe:
Ne vp and downe there in the stræetes to rome,
And for him selfe enquire at placebo.

His Tenaunts and his Fermars lyue at ease,
To whom he rayseth not a peny rent:
Which thyng dooth not a litle me displease,
As vnto pride a thing impertinent.

And I thinke to speake plainely at a word,
He had a great deale rather for to see:
Then silke on backe, good vitayles on his bord,
And spend his rent his hospitalitee.

Which sith it is a thyng agaynst my kind,
It must needes folowe that he hateth me:
And to my aduersarie is enclinde,
Therfore of this enquest ought not to be.

Then spake the wydow and the fatherlesse,
And sayd a meeter man then he was one:
Whose chalenge was his zeale to godlynesse,
If he be drawen (quoth they) we shal haue none.

Of all the chalenges that haue been taken,
In all the dayes and place where we haue ben:
Ne hard wee man for vertue yet forsaken,
Such fauour hath she with the sonnes of men.

Or at the least she ought to haue of ryght,
That whom so both the parties would admit,
A man that in her had his whole delight,
There should no priuate chalenge to him syt.

To wyt, of kynred or affinitie.
Indusing fauour as the Lawyers say:
And true, but yet among the vngodly,
Who, for their frendes sake from the trueth wyl (stray.

But of the godly other is thintent,
For they remember what their maister bad:
Thou shalt know no mans face in iudgement,
This earth to winne, from trueth they nyl be lad.

For brotherhod ne yet for cossinage,
For hope nor feare, loue, ne alliaunce:
For faire or foule countenaunce or language.
Unto them all for trueth they bid defiaunce.

As they that to no person bearen hate.
Ne wyshen euil vnto any wyght:
Or would him hinder for their frend his sake,
Such loue haue they to God, such zeale to ryght.

Yet are they often iudged of thunwyse,
To hate some persons, for they don hem blame:
Which is, for they loue them and hate their vice,
And gladly would them bring to better frame.

Wherefore this knight as we haue sayd before,
We thinke right mete to leaden this enquest:
And our assent be shall haue to be swore,
So passed we from him, and vnto the rest.

Yea for the loue of God then answeared I,
And bad him lay his hand vpon the booke,
And as he was a knight of auncestry.
Bad him regard his trueth and oath he tooke.

Which is (quoth I) that ye shall say the trueth,
If that the breeches of cloth haue don disseison:
To him of veluet that here as plaintife sueth,
Or from hym hath bereaft his right or reason.

Throughout this land in any place or coast,
Namely in London, and parties there about:
Where he him selfe complayneth wronged most,
And from fee and franke tenement put out.

And him shall repossesse yf ye it finde,
And cost and domage geue him for the wrong:
And this to don your oth here doth ye binde,
If not say so, and therein be not long.

That don I called next vnto the squyre,
To whom like chalenge as vnto the knight:
The veluet breeches tooke, but dyd retyre,
The gentleman also he let goe quite.

So three we had our Jury to begyn,
Now wyll we to the meaner sort quoth I:
And bad the Baker and Vitayler come in,
Also the Bruer who came as readely.

 The

The velvet breche then chalenged all three,
And that he sayde his cause was principall:
I am in debt vnto them all (quoth he)
And by my good will pay them here shall.

And fourtie pound it is to whom is leask,
Wherefore to tell you trueth I doo them hate:
And as myne enimies I them detest,
Ne shall they in that cause of myne debate.

The breche of cloth made answeare and defence,
And saide, with pride this chalenge rightly stood:
To yeld dispite and hate for recompence,
To such as in his nede had don hym good.

And this is not of late, ne yesterday.
For Jesus that was the sonne of Syrack:
Reade, yf the very same he dooth not say,
Which of such matter and of others spake.

Wherefore he thought this chalenge could be none,
Though on his side were parcialitie:
That proued neither of them such an one,
As therefore beare to him inimitie.

We asked then the triours what they thought,
I meane the wydowe and the fatherlesse:
They answeared the chalenge seemed nought,
Yet asked myne aduise neuertheless.

For that the veluet breeches further sayd,
That he had been arrested at their sute:
Desiring that the matter might be wayd,
And further of the cause they would dispute.

And yf the common lawe dyd it alowe,
As he dyd thinke in reason well it ought:
Those three be vtterly would disayowe,
With that I answeared, and sayd I thought.

The lawe would not, ne could intend so ill,
If him that sueth for to haue his debt:
That he of malice or of cuyll wyll,
Would seeke to be his hinderaunce or let.

Which were they ware his debtor to disable,
And bring him selfe to losse and hinderaunce:
Which is not to be thought nor intendable,
So thought the rest in finall concordaunce.

Wherefore they were itaken euery ons,
So seuen of our Jury sworen were:
Then calied I the Bricklayer alone,
Who answeared, but or he were come nere.

The breche of cloth to him this chalenge toke,
Of fourtie Chimneys that by him were built:
In one house there are scantly fiue that smoke,
So was there much good bricke and morter spilt.

So held he him vnfaithful in his hart,
That taketh wage and worketh all in vaine:
Nor for his hyre doth wyllyngly his part,
But only seeketh howe to rayse his gaine.

And so thereof he drew this consequent,
He that doth faile in one, wyll fayle in all:
For profyt or for frendshyp wyll relent.
And thought this chalenge was materiall.

The veluet breches hereunto replyed,
The chalenge was both false and slaunderous:
And want of smoke to be his fault denyed.
But rather of the dweller in the house.

Which was no fault in houses where he dwelt,
I built for pleasure cheefely and for shewe:
Where rost ne sodde is very seldome smelt,
Saue for our selfe and others very fewe.

The fyre then being small or none within.
It must needes folowe of necessitie:
The smoke that commeth thence for to be thyne,
I am the cause thereof my selfe, not he.

So this was thought by all the multitude,
A good excuse and fully answeared:
And him a lawfull man they dyd conclude,
For proofe whereof was further alledged,

Howe greatlie was the ſcience to commend,
Which maketh houſes wherein men may dwell:
In him is not to lymytte other end,
To witte if men them vſen yll or well.

Or ſæden there the powre or els the riche,
Ne in what part their bellies or theyr eyes,
For hoſpitalyties are not all aliche:
With them that now adaies are holden wyſe.

But as I ſayde before it was agræd,
The craftes man could not dwe there with all:
That truelie dyd employ his worke in dæde,
As well vpon the kytchin as the hall.

Wherefore he was admitted to the reſt,
And numbred vnto them they weren eyght:
Thence to thinkormer forthwith I me dreſt,
And called him, and he appeared ſtraight.

The breche of clothe him forthwith challenged,
I aſked him the cauſe he would ſhew none:
But that the name it ſelfe was deteſted,
What næde he ſhew cauſe vnto ſuch a one.

Whoſe very name, and whoſe profeſſion,
Throughout this land is foule and ſclaunderous,
Ye ſpeake (quod I) without diſcreſſion.
And in your iudgement are prepoſterous.

Alas

That for an euill member two or three,
Or more or lesse that be degenerate:
And fallen from their office and degree,
Condemneth all the bodies whole estate.

And geueth priuate faulte, a blame publicke,
I meane the office for his Officer:
Alas yet the common sort so wicke'
Of Innocence to make a trespasser.

This wickednesse is not of yesterday,
That priuate faulte doth geue publick offence=
For one yll man of thousandes to myslay,
Of callinges and Estates of reuerence.

That in a common welth ben seruisable,
And of the same the preseruation:
Degrees and Lawes so highe venerable.
That who can saye theyr commendation.

That for theyr worthines they ought to haue,
Yet these I saye dwe suffer euyll name:
And sclaunder for naught els, but that a knaue,
Hath of them made a cloake for dede of shame.

What wickednesse can greater be then this,
Of honest trade, so euyll for to speaken:
For one or two that ben it amis,
On whom it hath not might it selfe to wreken.

For

For lawes and statutes, are naught els but words,
And dw not speake them selues, which is worse.
For if they could, or handle knives and swords,
A number shoulde be leaner in the purse.

Wherefore I wishe no man that feareth God,
To iudgen all after the dæde of Sum:
For that by common reason is forbod,
And Christ hath sayd there shalbe scandalum.

Men ought therefore to proue or they allowe,
Or hastily done any wight despise:
As Christ and Paul I know, but who are you.
To find them out that vse his name for lyes.

And proue if they be such in very dæde,
As in their worde, and in their countenaunce.
For falsehod ofte is clad in costly wæde,
And yll men com by offices by chaunce.

In whome although there be misgouernaunce,
As som for lacke of wisedome or of skyll:
Others for they make of it chevisaunce:
And to commaund, and haue the world at wyll.

Wherefore to turne whereas we lefte before.
And of this challenge better to enquire:
For of this trade me næneth say no more,
As of it selfe pure honest and entyre.

But

But to the person what ye can obiect,
Or put it to the tryours to defyne:
If ye can him of any vice detect,
Let them vpon the matter determine.

With that the widdowe and the fatherlesse,
Sayd, they knewe not his person what he was:
Yet with our leaue they wouldeu make a gesse,
And we should see howe it would come to pas.

For we that dwell farre from this town, quod they,
Thought we come not at Innes of Court to lern:
Yet dearely for our learning dowe we pay,
As peraduenture heere ye shall discern.

And for to trye this matter first of all,
(For we must goe quod they by circumstaunce:
His bagge is full, let vs see wherewithall,
Which he was lothe, but dyd at our instaunce.

It was a great bagge like a Fawconere,
And hong vpon his gyrdle by a ring:
And hundreth writtes at least within it were,
Nowe shall ye see, quod they, for your learning.

And bad me reade in them as they arose,
Naught but the Label, and the parties name,
She asked then thinformer who were those,
And where they dwelt, wherin they were to blame

But

But of an hundreth he ne knew but three,
Ne what they were, ne what towne they dwelt in
Nor what they had offended more then wee,
And so me thought straunge matter dyd begin.

How that this widowe and this fatherlesse,
Which both were of no learning neither skyll,
Should by such circumstaunce this matter gesse,
To trye a man his inward thought and wyll.

Then they him asked what was his purpose,
He aunswered it was yet longe to term:
And sure he was there were such men as those,
For he had messagers abrode to lern.

So that or terme he could them serue erbe one,
And for all those that he thought would appere
He would not want his declaration,
And though he dyd yet were they not the nere.

For I declare (quod he) in the Tam quam,
How so the matter goe they gette no cost:
For alwaies on the surer syde I am,
To agree with me is best, and so owe most.

And better then vppon it to appere,
And stand to tryall to their great expence:
And though not guyltie, yet never the nere:
They get of me no peny in recompence.

So

So that the best is alwayes to agrée,
Although they haue offended in nothing:
And geue a crowne to saue fourtie,
Yea rather then faile smaller offering.

Somtime I take a Capon, or a Goose,
A peece of Bacon or a peece of Beefe:
Or for a pecke of Corne we let one loose,
A small price to redeeme so great a mischiefe.

With that the company gan on him looke,
Namelye the widow and the fatherlesse:
And bad hym take his hand of from the booke,
For they beleeued all he dyd confesse.

And bad him goe his waye such as he was,
The sclaunder of an honest misterye,
Suborned therevnto by Sathanas,
What is there that abused may not be.

Then to the Master of the daunsing schoole,
And eke the Master of the dysing house:
The worst of them no bowball, ne no foole,
To them the breche of clothe dyd crye rescouse.

As they that in no wise were to admitte,
Professed foes to vertue by their trade:
To godlinesse and goodnesse oppositte,
And of all mischiefe verye roote and blade,

So for the Maister of the dysing house,
He sayd he would not aunswere to that name,
And thereof he misliked meruelous,
And for I termed him so he dyd me blame.

Would God it were so sayd the company.
And that men dyd accompt as myckle shame
In dæde to execute iniquitye,
As them were lothe thereof to haue the name.

In déede (quoth he) I kæpe an ordinarye,
Eight pence a meale who there, doth sup or dyne:
And dyse and cardes, are but an accessarye.
At aft meales who shall paye for the wine.

These wayten all vppon our principall,
As collourable cause to bring them in,
And then from thence to share money they fall,
Tyll some of them be shriuen of theyr sinne.

But of this game and other harlotrye,
That there is vsed both by daye and night:
Suffiseth me to waren riche thereby.
Thereafter yet in name I wyll not bight.

This challenge was holden peremptorye.
Such as of further tryall had no næde:
A trade maintained though vaine glorye,
And pryde, and many a lewde and shamefull déede

The veluet breech sayd that it was not so,
He sayd it was both false and sclaunderous:
To his good name and to a number mo,
By such as were of his welth envious.

And of his good estate and countenaunce,
Which was not small, ne with the lowest sort:
And praied witnesse of his fowle misparlaunce,
That of a Gentleman gaue such report.

A man that for his welth, his land and fée,
Is taken as I sayd among the best:
For fortye pound a yéere dispend maye hée,
That he hath purchased this is the least.

The breeche of cloth sayd, whereto is this glose,
Of welth, of friendship and possession:
Which serueth not to this present purpose.
But from our matters are dygression.

For welth wée holden no conclusion.
What so it be, of golde or reuenew:
Namelye, gotten by the confusion,
Of youth, and other meanes, lewd and vntrew.

But he remaineth that he was before,
A wicked wretche, yea and a great deale worse:
His craft and lewdnesse cause of his great store,
His house of sinne, a mother and a nurse.

But

But to the wydowe and the fatherlesse,
Their iudgement and experience:
They answeared, and that with quicke addresse,
And this was all theffect of their sentence.

That his attendaunce here was litle worth,
Nor yf it were gods wyl in other place:
So thought the rest, and bad him get him forth,
And forward on our matter gan we pace.

Then came the daunsing master well beseene,
Who somewhat eke misliked of that name:
Master of Musicke termed would haue beene,
A Science liberall of noble fame.

The breche of cloth to him a chalenge tooke,
And sayde to hym he neuer yet was freend:
For in his schoole his arse he neuer shooke,
The schoole of pryde where only it dooth end.

Where well is him that brauest shewe can make,
In hose and doubled lenyed by lyne.
Poynted & bottoned as in a brake.
No silke ne veluet there is holden fyne.

And as for me, I am as welcome there,
As yf in Pairis garden ye haue beene:
The dogges are welcome to the Bull or Beare,
Which for to daun them mischiefe are full keene.

The veluet breches forthwith answeared,
And sayd he spake full like such as he was:
A fole that knewe nothing of lustiehed,
But all his liue had liued like an asse.

He knew what dyd become a gentleman.
And brought him into fauour and to grace:
And to no small preferment now and than,
If finely with a woman he couth trace.

A thing not inferior to vertue,
And hath prescription for her vsage:
The story of king Dauid is not newe,
What so the folish breeche of cloth doth rage.

The breech of cloth as touching lustiehead.
Made answeare that he knew not what it was:
But it were youth with wealth prauished,
To spoyle them selues and their name to deface.

As many he had knowen do thereby,
And as for fauour that it purchaseth:
A wanton minde may cast a fantasie,
But as it lyghtly came it vanisheth.

And whereas of prescription ye tel
And for such filth aledgen vsage:
Of that good patriarke of Israel.
To that good king ye don great disparage.

His daun ſing was ful far vnlike to this,
Who hath the ſtory read and vnderſtood:
For woman led he none certaine that is,
And on his backe ware a linen Ephod.

Ne there did tricke of xv. or eleuen,
Of both the which to whom he came the next
I dare wel vndertake he lacked ſeuen,
Read yf ye lyſt ſuch matter in the text.

Or in his dauncе obſerued cinquopas,
Saue playne and ſimplie leaped as for ioye:
His wyfe Mycholl ne liked of the grace,
Reſembling him to a light head boye.

For ſturdie proud and arrogant was ſhée,
And thought it ful vnſæmely and vnmæt:
To ſæ a prince of that humilitie,
To daunce amid the people in the ſtræt.

And namely in a ſimple white Ephod,
Wherefore ſhe caſt him in the téeth withal:
But what ſayd he I wyl yet ſerue my god,
And lower yet before his face wyl fal.

Which hath diſherited thy fathers houſe,
And choſen me to ſit vpon his ſeate:
Ye bryngeth downe the proud preſumptuouſe,
And kindly doth the humble ſort entreat

Yer wordes and eke his answeare to the same,
Ye may finde written in the booke of kinges:
How earnestly the good king shee dyd blame,
And him disdayned for his dowinges.

So when I sawe the matter goe so hard,
And so defended by the breache of cloth:
Well (said I) let the triours then award,
And indge indifferently betweene ye both.

With that the wydowe and the fatherlesse,
Sayd, they thought well of mirth and melody:
As things that heavy mindes dyd oft redresse.
So that no further evyl came thereby.

Which was a matter hard to undertake,
Where daunsing was practised so much:
And lusty gallant for his Ladyes sake,
Supposeth as him selfe there is none such.

For there is wonderfull abuse quoth she,
Even among the playne and simple sort:
Where nought els but a Bagge piper is to see,
Yet is there pride and follie in their sport.

And rather then they wyll not be as fine.
As who is finest, yea as smoth and slicke:
And after sit uppermost at the wine,
Or nale to make hard shift they wyll not sticke.

Such

Suche humble curteſies, and ſuch louing lookes,
As there bæn vſed, practiſed, and taught:
There neede to lecherie none other bookes,
Ne other ſchooles to bring young folke to naught.

Shortly they ſayd he was a man vnmeete,
And to the veluet breeches perciall:
So then I ſpake to him, and bad him fleete,
And take his eaſe, and dyd another call.

Which was the huſbandman the ſælie Hinde,
And he no ſooner was come in the place:
Then veluet breeches gan great fault to finde,
And for his ſimplenesſe dyd him diſgrace.

And tooke not his chalenge particuler.
But ſayd he was vnworthy and vnable:
As he by proofe and reaſon would aner,
And to the cloth breethe alſo fauourable.

And for the fyrſt poynt was to him denied,
Which was concerning his habilitie:
Ye ſayd that his addicion implyed,
No thing ſo litle as ciuilitie.

Nor knowledge in ſuch cauſes to debate,
Of pollicie or education:
But rather of his mattockes and his rake,
With whom he hath his conuerſation.

For of al other folke he knoweth leſt,
And farthеſt is from learnyng & from ſkil:
But yf it be in fodderyng of a beaſt,
Then howe can he be iudged good and ill.

And ſo much for his fyrſt exception,
To proue that he was a man vnmeet:
And parcial he would him proue anone.
For cauſes that he would vs done to weet.

Beſides that he was inſufficient,
And had not.xl.s. of freeholde:
Which was another matter that he ment,
That from this charge alſo doth him withhold.

The breech of cloth maintayned the reuers,
And in the matter ſayd he would be ſhort:
And fyrſt he would the chalengers rehearſe,
And to theyr anſweare orderly reſort.

For ignorance and inſufficience,
For want of.xl.s. of free holde:
Becauſe that of his non indifference, (would.
No cauſe was ſhewd he knewe not what there

Conſerning fyrſt of al his ignorance,
And that he was vnwoorthy for to deeme:
In matters of ſo great impoртance,
He ſayd the contrary was dayly ſeene.

And

And that they should not charged be to saine,
Matter that was in learning and iudgement:
For to their handes it shalbe made so plaine,
And eke by proofe so playne and euident.

That ere they could not but of wylfulnesse.
And of their proper malice wittingly:
Then want of learnyng is not wickednesse,
Nor yet appropriate to husbandry.

An art aboue all others commendable,
For eld of tyme and for necessitie:
I meane to mans lyfe so seruisable,
As other none science ne facultie.

Requireth learning, payne, and diligence,
To dealen with the earth that is so iust:
Where but he marke the heauens influence,
In steade of corne oft shall he gather dust.

And but he deale with iudgement and with skyll,
Obseruing well his seasons, tymes, and houres:
And in due order plant, sowe, set, and till:
And wysely can foresee the wyndes and showres.

Ye dooth not well deserue to haue that name,
And that these thinges are not of importance:
Who so it sayth, I holde him much to blame,
As of our lyues the greatest sustenance.

A Science holden alway reuerend,
Of which also yf I should speake the prayes:
And for the worthynesse should it commend,
It might suffice a worke for many dayes.

By kinges and patriarkes that han it vsed,
An art by God so loued that from thence:
To chose a king oft tyme be not refused,
As Samuel dooth beare good euidence.

As touchyng his freehold I wyll not mell,
But put it to the tryours to enquire:
And as they finde the trueth so let them tell.
Which is almuche as ye both can desyre.

The tryours sayd he had sufficient,
And quickly of that doubt resolued vs:
They sayd he myght spend.xls.rent,
And in the Quenes booke was assessed thus.

Thus are those causes fully answeared,
Then sayd the breech of cloth, and further prayed,
Ye might be sworne that was more hast then nede.
Quoth they of veluet, for he had not sayd.

Ne spoken for to proue him partiall.
Which at the fyrst was one exception:
Goe to(quoth wee) be answeared so I shall,
And forward with his matter is he gon.

As sure (quod he) as where is discordaunce,
And opposition of qualitie:
Can be no friendship ne alliaunce,
So sure I am this plowman hateth me.

For veluet breeche are not for his weare,
To toyle and tomble in the durt withall:
He hateth too much costlinesse of geare,
And sayth therein is purpose none at all.

Besides all this howe he doth sclaunder mée,
As one that geueth daungerous counsell:
Both against him and eche other degrée,
A whole day would not serue me for to tell.

He sayth I was the chiefest counsellor,
And first that bad his Landlorde rayse his rent:
And after for to sell both farme and manor,
And made him borrow where he might haue len

Such extréme pylling, and such bryberie,
As neuer was hard tell of or this age:
The villain sayth it is all long of me,
He sayth I haue brought men into that rage.

That no man is content with his estate,
No nor yet woman by your leaue saith he:
And thence ariseth such sute and debate,
At Westminster as daily is to see.

And

And Offices so very profitable,
That by a man hath had one seuen yére:
Is some can vse them now he may be able,
With Esquier Knight or Baron to be pére.

I know I haue had oft his bitter curse,
For he is somtime pynched for my sake:
But no force for his words he shall fare worse,
This is the third exception that I take.

The brécch of cloth made answer that him thought,
This opposition of qualitie.
And all the other causes by him brought,
Were no prowfe that he parciall would be.

To any wight that truth had on his syde,
Whom for to doubt is almost to confesse:
That by a iust iudge he dare not be tried,
And said his challeng did implie no lesse.

For he him thought of that indifference,
That he in all this earth ne hateth wight,
Ne would but for pure zeale of truth dispence,
Ne shrinke for King ne Caesar from the right.

And prayed me to speaken what I thought,
If this obiection were answered:
Which he against the husbandman had brought,
For long he thought to be deliuered.

He prayed the widow and the fatherlesse,
Their minde & what they thought therof to tell:
Who shortly did their mindes therin expresse,
And said the challeng was avoyded well.

So was the plowmen taken to the rest,
And sworn to deale according to the troth:
Then forward in our matters we vs dyest,
Betweene this breech of velvet and of cloth.

Then called I the Shoemaker and Smyth,
The Tanner graisier and the Vintener:
Who ready were at hand and came full swith,
And challenged of neither part they were.

As men like favorable vnto both,
No more vnto the one then to the other:
Sauc to the vyntener the breeche of clothe,
Spake thus in gentle wordes & said my brother

Your 4yeour is so mightie and so strong,
And therewithall it goeth down so soft,
That of your gueskes some bibb therof so long,
Till from the ground it lifteth them aloft.

Higher (as they suppose) then any steeple,
In all this Towne, Saint Nighell or the Bow
No longer are they of the common people,
And if they talke of beggers, no I trowe.

But all of Myllions of markes and poundes,
And of their credite, and their great chaffare:
An Dake is but a træ, no by his woundes.
So that ye wynne theeeby, what dwe ye care.

Dr els for other fowle and filthye talke,
Which is so lou'de and common in your house:
Your cheker man for it doth kæpe no chalke,
Wherefore me thinketh it were perillous.

By such a man as ye are, to be tryed,
Whose trade is galiaudise, drinke and disport:
Both which are friendes to wylfulnesse and pride,
Contrary to the sober godly sort.

For from your house, you send them forth so hotte,
So verye ranke their blod so sore incensed:
That shame and feare of sinne is cleane forgotte,
And hart and minde are therevnto licensed.

The filthye whoredome I take to witnesse,
That is so common, and so exercised:
I wyll not saye the Sodomites bad lesse,
Ne for it smaller punishment deuised.

Then vp and downe to haue them by cart,
To shame such as knew neuer any shame:
And lesse of Godlye nurture any part,
But oft laughan stylic at the same.

The

The Veluet breaches for him aunſwered,
And for ſtrength of his drinke excuſed him:
For he allayed them both white and red,
And oft with water made them ſmall and thinne

Or with ſome other wine that was full yll,
So that if any it miſtempered:
It ſhould ſeeme at the leaſt againſt his wyll,
That from him went ſo many a drunken bed.

As for theyr lewde talke and their harlotrye,
Ye was no officer to paniſhe them:
But as he might and had auctoritye,
Their good drinke (as I ſayd) to ming & blenne.

And good inough (he thought) to ſpoyle and waſte.
For when the drinke hath once their hed poſſe
The good and yll to them hath all one taſte,
So that they paye for it, as for the beſt.

And where he ſayth that whoredome is in wine,
And dronkenneſſe he ſayd that was not true:
In all, though in ſome, and namely for the time,
For ſome (quod he) had more neede to goe ſpue.

As they that been full ill at eaſe and ſicke,
And haue not might ſo much as they haue will,
Till they haue ſlept but after if they kicke,
Allas the day is that ſo great an ill.

That it should néede so great a punishment,
The vintener amercing them so déepe:
That though they haue not grace for to repent,
Their wife and children oft for hunger wéepe.

And this he doth the rather for my sake,
The other answered he thought no lesse:
And said thereof non oath him needeth take,
So was it put vnto the fatherlesse.

And widowe for to saie therof their minde,
They said the challeng was not principall:
And that the creature of proper kinde,
Was good though we offenden therewithall.

As for the Seller though there were abuse,
And much vngodlines within his house,
He might alledge vnwares for his excuse,
And eke to deale with such is daungerous.

No further then by faire perswasion,
Which to these drunkerds and vngodly:
Doth rather kindle more occasion.
To wickednes and like vnthriftie.

Therefore was he admitted to the rest,
And as his fellowes all did him before.
Upon his othe did faithfully protest,
They bad me count or I toke any more,

So

So then I called them as ye shall here,
The knight the squire and the gentleman:
The Baker Brewer and the victualler,
The Tanner grasier and the husbandman.

The Haberdasher and the Vintener,
The Bricklayer and the Smyth also:
The weauer and with him the Shoomaker.
So was our Jury full complet and mo.

For I them counted no lesse then fifténe,
Yet would I put none of them out againe,
The moe (thought I) the better wyll they déeme,
So then to open them the matter plaine.

I read them ouer all the whole record,
Euery point and article at large:
And eke the sense and meaning of eche word,
I shewd, and therwithall what was their charg

And bad them for a time to go aside,
And ripely of the matter to debate:
And pray to God therein to be their guide,
That they ne did but right to none estate.

With that they went from me a certaine space,
Not full the distaunce of a hundred fote:
I with the rest abode styll in the place,
And sodainlye while I aside dyd looke.

Me thought I was ware of a company,
That downe the hyll dyd come an easte pace:
Thinking to me they meant to gone vs by,
As, passagers that would to further place.

Tyll I perceaued by the way they tooke,
They meant to turne from vs to neither hand:
Then gan I neerer vpon them to looke,
Whence and who they should be to vnderstand.

And sawe them thrée in number, moe ne lesse,
Youthfull as theyr apparell dyd report:
But who they were, or whence I could not gesse,
Weaponed in verye defensable sort.

Eache of them hauing at his syde a sword,
And in his hand a buckler large and brode:
Wée mused all what would hereof beword,
Yet sayd nothing sayd, but in our place abode.

And loe where yet came from the other syde,
Thrée other like in euery regard:
Unto the fyrst, and faste against them hyde,
To meten them, who came as ye haue hard.

We gan to maruell what they ment to doone,
And gessed diuersly of their intent:
For that they dyd eche toward other come:
We iudged all some straunge purpose they men

One

One gessed, surely here wyll be some fray,
For whiche this tyme and place appoynted are:
And truely: but alas and well away,
Farre other wyse then all we were aware.

And that the breche of cloth fall dew abought,
As ye shall here, before this matter end:
And of their cruelties whiche there they wrought,
Upon the gyltlesse who might not defend.

A storie pitifull and lamentable,
Inough to warne erbe wyght that be ne trust:
To worldly proffer, fals and deceyuable,
Which turneth as the wheele of fortune lust.

Agaynst all wysedome, counsell, and forecast,
Agaynst all hope and expectation:
Howe so we builde, howe so we tryen fast,
When we thinke sure all, fare well all is gon.

What so it was in the we by likelynesse,
Of what securitie or assuraunce:
One minute turneth it to nothing lesse,
As in this matter ye shall se the chaunce.

This breche of cloth hauing in all our sight,
His cause so good that nedelie must be winne:
And that the verdict must nedes kynde his right,
And that in all our iudgementes well wonshym.

Yet came he to a miserable ende,
A great example of al humane chaunce:
From which yet no wyght may himself defend,
While Fortune hath his matter in ballaunce.

With plainely for to shew as it befell,
And where I left to take my hold agayne:
These fire of whom I told you fayre and wel,
In two companyes as ye heard me sayne.

Direcly came toward the breech of cloth,
By wil vnto hym they came so nere,
As that the breech was midd betwene them both.
And then spake one of them as ye shal here.

Thou breech of cloth thou wrde of lowlines.
That hast not feared to mayntayne thy cause:
Agaynst this garment of such woorthynes,
And al of conforces thou hast in lawes.

And told and vttered hast in thy defence,
Such thinges as were not meete to bene ikndw:
And better had thou of them kept silence,
Then tel them to thyne vtter ouerthrow.

Thou shalt therefore be a memorial,
Of such as with their hatters daren stryue:
In cause neuer so iust, and therewithal,
Vpon the breech they al take hold belyue.

But

But for to see how they him puld and halde,
My selfe and others of the company:
That it beheld for pitie were appald,
To see them shew that extreme crueltie.

For this and this laid hold vppon a syde,
Vpon the panes before and eke behynde:
That one pane from another gan to ride,
Both out syde and that wherewith it was lynde.

So that they were defaced in a throw,
And peece by peece so very final itorn:
That there nys man so conning that couth know,
Or gesse what garment they had ben before.

Not so much as the codpeece was exempt,
Or for his service so much favor found:
As not to be in peeces al to rent,
And here and there in peeces throwen a ground.

I reade of no suche execution,
But it were Penthews that dyd dispise:
The Bachanals and dissolution,
Doone to that Monken god in sacrifice.

Of whom his mother and his nerest frendes,
In maintenaunce of their idolatrie:
Became the cruel murderers and fendes,
Reade Ouids Metamorphose if I lye.

The Jury when they sawe the breche itorne.
And sawe by consequent the strife was ended:
For which they were impanelled and sworne,
And for they wist not what was them intended.

Away ranne they eche man in all he might,
Ne chose their way, but as aduenture fell:
Or if it wist they were nigh out of sight,
To folowe them I nede aske no councell.

But after them as hard as I could gon,
So fast me thought as neuer yet dyd man:
But he were legged as was Acteon,
When he vnware had loked on dyan.

Nor neuer turned once to loke behinde,
For all our matters and our businesse:
They were the furthest thing out of my minde,
For that no hope remayned of redresse.

But for to make an end as I haue sayd,
Thus ended was our matter of debate:
I sodenly out of my slepe abrayd,
And at the fyrst full pensiue was and mate.

And loked all my chamber round about,
And called to remembraunce all my sweuen:
And yf I were at home yet gan I doubt,
I meane where as I layd me downe at euen.

So when I had a whyle consydered,
And viewed well the wyndowe and the wall:
And founde my selfe betwéene my sheetes in bed,
I gan to sigh and thanked God for all.

I sawe the day that now gan to disclose,
And Phebus rysing with his golden beame:
Then thought I sodenly vpon my hose,
Such was yet my remembraunce of my dreame.

I looked where I layde them ouernight,
Vpon my bedde euen at the very facte:
And when I sawe them whole & in good plight,
I was glad it was not for to wéete.

Then cast I in my minde where I had béene,
And mused of these matters that I mett:
So straunge, and so incredible to wéene.
And to that end I would them not forget.

I purposed to write them in a booke,
Yet therewithall I had this fantasie:
They will but laugh at me that on it looke.
And yf they do, I lose not all thought I.

For laughter healthy is and profitable,
And signe of both, men say where I haue béen:
Of heale and weale which both are delectable,
For common is this word, they laugh that wyn.

So that it hurt no wyght shal me suffice,
Which yet it can not do but yf they wyl:
For they may shutt theyr eares or close theyr eyes.
That fearc in hearing it taken ill.

Thus wandred my mynd in matters smal,
And how that as smal things were put in thought
Though some iudge of it it so wyl not al,
Nor hym condemne of folie that it wrought.

So after al these thinges consydered,
As also that it was long to endite:
Now wyl I proue (quoth I) my simple hed,
What he hath kept and what he can recite.

And helpe me all this matter to contryue.
In order as it passed in my slepe:
If in hym be vertue memoratiue,
To hold the thinges geuen hym to kepe.

And haue it written to my remembrance,
Without omitting matter principal:
Although that somewhat of the circumstance,
I haue for want of carvage let fal.

Therefore beseech I every gentle wyght,
That shal it reade to iudge of it the best:
The rather for it is not in our might,
What we wyl dreame in bed when we do rest.

But

But as it falleth vs by aduenture,
Both for the substance and the qualitie:
We can not couenant by Indenture,
Ne yet compound before what it shalbe.

And therfore though it haue smal appearance,
To be a trueth let no man it dispise:
Or him that wrot it for no recompence,
Haue labour for his paine without reprise.

For who so shal esteeme his labour lost,
That shal it read, he may thinke therewithal:
I lost more manifold both paine and cost,
Yet neuer greeued me ne neuer shal.

For while I wrote this I dyd nothyng els,
Saue that I kept mynd from idlenesse:
The cause of harlottry as Ouid tels,
So wyl it them that read it as I gesse.

Better I wys then Amadis de Gaule,
Or els the pallas forced with pleasure:
Who though they promise bonny peldrugale,
And vnto coales do turne they: fained treasure.

Or Ballads that entreate of nought but loue,
Of plaints, vnkindnesse, and of gelosie:
Which are of wonderfull effectes to moue,
Young peoples mindes that reade them to folly.

Of whiche neuertheleſſe we dayly ſee,
How many, and how cunning are the Clarkes:
I bidde ye not herein to credite me,
Beleeue their writinges & their noble warkes.

But to my purpoſe whiche I haue attained,
For my defence and of my dreame alſo:
There is no man alyue that here is blamed,
I knowe not ſuch a man as weren tho.

That by the breche of cloth were chalenged,
Nor I thinke neuer were, for to my wyt:
They were fantaſticall imagined,
Onely as in my dreame I dyd ſurmit.

Wherefore no man thinke him ſelfe ſpoken to,
For any thing that I haue told you in my ſweuen,
Who thinketh he dooth well, ſo let him dw,
And chooſe him how this matter he wyl læuen.

Beſides all this, leaſt any man miſiudge,
Of theſe my wordes, or hold me partiall:
As bearyng to the buttockes any grudge.
More then vnto the other members all.

Becauſe my matter hath ben of a breeche.
Which is their habit and their couertare:
To thinke none ill therein I them beſeeche,
Or that their loſſe I haue ment to procure.

As

As that they might not weare as may the reſt,
I meane the members of moze wozthines:
Foz ſure I holde they ought to weare the beſt,
And if ye read S. Paule, he ſaith no leſſe.

Wherefoze to buttockes euil Iuuentment,
Moze then vnto the belly oz the backe:
Oz elſe the head concerning oznament,
Foz nature hath moze furniſhed their lack.

They may with leſſe ſhame be diſcouered,
And naked then the lower partes may be:
Though yet vnſæmely ſauing foz the head,
Of man: foz why of God th'image is hæ.

And is the ground of reaſon and the roote,
The ſeate of vnderſtanding and of wit:
Guide of the reſt, yea both of hand and foote,
And Royall as a king on high doth ſit.

And therefoze if the buttockes do exceede,
Oz be to monſtrous in that they weare:
The head ought to be blamed foz the dæde,
Foz reaſon ought to haue his dwelling there.

Not in the buttockes who know nothing leſſe,
Then what is ſæmely foz them to put on:
And are appointed other buſyneſſe,
But if the head they chaunce to ouer gone.

And take vpon them for to beare the sway,
For reason let in Sensualitie.
Which sure they will do if they get the kaye,
As proue some weddings made to hastelie.

Withouten any councell had before,
Of them that should of right haue delt therein:
Fie fie let be, I pray ye of that no more,
What should we aske aduise of friend or kynne.

Among our youth this chaunceth now and then.
But seld or neuer with the elder sort:
That set their childrens partes at sir or tenne,
And all for neither counsell and comfort.

But this is somwhat out of my purpose,
Whose meaning was naught but to satisfie:
Such as (because my matter was of hose)
Might thinke I would the buttockes inturie.

Thus for the matter of my dreame ynough,
To him or her that might thereof misthinke:
Now for the forme therof is very rough,
I may not that defend with pen nor Inke.

But as in the first part of this iourney,
When first we entred into this matter:
I olde them I was but an atturney,
What næded me to bragg or els to clatter.

And

And of that order (I am sure) the worst,
I say for knowledge in this action:
For sure in all my life it was the first,
Not onely whereof I had the direction.

But whereof I had ben at the passage,
So that I had but small experience:
To bene the guide of such a carpage,
and hauing there also no presidence.

And as for my learning and my studie,
Hath bene but smal though som what I haue red:
I wrote neuer day with prothonotory,
And therefore was but smally furnished.

Therefore beseech I such as be learned,
Into whose hands this work may chaūce to come
Barresters or how so ye ben termed,
To iudgen of it after your wisedome.

For that I geue the plentife no collor,
Nor for such matters do obserue decorum:
With vs was neither dyer nor Fuller,
And (as I said) my selfe had nihil horum.

Therefore no collours there they gat of me,
Saue such as they themselues with them brought,
which (as me thought) were but to great plentie.
And that to litle purpose as me thought.

If I haue pleaded further in the right,
In action which is but possessory:
Then by the nature of thæ wryte I might,
I could not therein be peremptory.

But that ech partie would haue his reason;
To proue their issue which was generall:
Is ye haue hard, nul tort nul disseason,
And weyuen would no point for them might fal.

Wherfore my masters you that in pleading,
And in the learned points thereof haue skill:
Worthie of weightie matter to haue leading,
Beare with him that ground neuer in your mill.

Ye in your large corne fieldes hath harnessed,
The sheaues of that right noble Science:
But here and there as ye haue scattered,
Hath gleaned after you without offence.

And did in this matter for his talent,
Which is as much as he could do therein:
Is he to whom was but one peny lent,
Yet was not vsing of it holden sinne.

And so Christ himselfe hath said in parable,
Wherefore I trust ye will accompt no wourse:
Of him that would do good as he is able,
Then him that gaue all that was in his purse.

As

betweene Pride and Lowlines.

As whilom did the widow with her myte,
Your gentle iudgement and your curtesie:
I pray the author of all goodnes quite.
To whom be laud and praise eternally.

Ecclesiasticus. Cap. x.

The beginning of mans pryde is to fall away from God, and why his hart is gone from his make for pride is the originall of all sinne.

¶ A commendation of lowlynesse for her consolation.

TO shew the value price and worthines,
And truely to describe humilitie:
(Which is in Englishe called lowlynes)
So lively as to say, loe this is shee.

Although it passe my learning and my skill,
Yet is my labour to her such a debt:
Of right so due that as I can I will,
To quiten her my diligence beset.

And tell her praise as nere as I can gesse,
Her nature her effect and qualitie:
Although for want of cunning I them lesse,
So faire vnable her to beautifie.

A worke for him that learned were and wise,
And had of colloures and of Rethoricke:
As doth belong to such an enterprise,
Or else that coulde of Science poeticke.

With whō though mine acquaintance be but small,
Such as I haue (if any thing as be)
She doth command hath done and euer shall,
Winne I thereby or lose nought reketh me.

Then

Then duely of this vertue to discource,
In order shewing what she is and whence.
And of what vertues origin and source,
I purpose asking (Lord) thine assistence.

And seeking first from whence she hath her name,
Of earth I finde doth come humilitie:
Then ought she be resemblant to the same.
Now is the earth the lowest in degree.

I meane of euery other element,
Which round about her ben encompassed:
Yet with that place doth hold her well content.
Sith he that all might hath so ordered.

Who though he gaue to her the lowest seat,
Yet we that dwell vpon her daily see:
In how great kindnes he doth her intreat,
And vs his creatures that in her bee.

For there nis element so high ne tall,
That doth not serue her by commandement,
The Sunne his beames vpon her must let fall,
And cloudes their raines and their nourishment.

Hence for my matter gather I this proofe,
That as the earth contented is to dwell:
In base estate and yet for her behoofe,
Prouided is and furnished so well.

Whera

Whereas if otherwise she would becall,
Yeaue the Mone the Starres, or else, ỹ Sunne:
I doubt not but that worse would her befall,
Wisely therfore she leaueth it vndonne.

And holdeth to the place where she was set,
Ne with the planets seeketh to compare:
But from them doth her necessaries fet,
Which they to yelden her contented are.

That by the same example we are taught,
which ben her children of her body borne:
Considered that we be come of naught,
Of base and lowe degree to thinke no scorne.

Which is the thing I call humilitie.
And is a vertue deere and precious:
And hath the promise of eternitie,
And in this life of blessings meruellous.

In earth begetteth peace and plentie,
Two things now wished for of all mankind,
By their contraries I may well conclude,
Who maken heauy hart and wofull mind.

To proue the first which is that lowlines,
Begetteth peace, It is as euident:
As it is plaine that pride doth nothing lesse,
For proofe wherof there neede none argument.

But

But yf that matter wyll you not ſuffice,
And that ye wyll demaund authoritie:
Reade bookes that of ſuch matter doth deuiſe,
In holy or in prophane hiſtorie.

If ye can finde that there was trueth or loue,
Or vnitie of hart in houſe or towne:
Where euery Iauell nades would be aboue,
And held his halpeny to be a crowne.

Marke (I ſay) yf ye haue ſéene charitie,
And louing kindneſſe in any nacion:
Suffering eche others aduerſitie,
Which is the thing we call compaſſion.

Marke well theſe perſons and their gouernaunce:
And ye ſhall finde on perill of my lyfe:
They bén ſuch as doon not them ſelues aduaunce,
Ne wyll for litle matter mouen ſtryfe.

As doon the proud, who therof thinke diſdayne,
I meane to borowe any cuyl word:
That they ne pay it treble horns agayne,
So largely any good they hold afford.

Then ryſeth quarell, vp goe the fiſtes and battes,
And I as good as thou, and thou as I:
Out goon ſub penes, out flaien latitattes,
Who may him rule, who may him pacifye.

Then warrants of the peace, and good abearing,
And deepe othes sworne of matters daungerous:
For feare of meeting with a pickled hearing,
And mountaynes made of matters fryuolous.

For councell he ne wanteth of his sort,
That wyll him tell his cause is very good:
And with such words his folly wyll support,
Then must they goe to let a boggeshed blood.

Or els a barrell of strong ale or beere,
Whereas betweene the goblet and the wall:
His aduersarie shall abie full deere,
And casten how the matter wyll befall.

Of learned lawyer seeketh he no skill,
Him needeth not, for why he hath at hand:
A broker that shall teache him lawe his fill,
And shew him fully how his case doth stand.

Though he ne studied in his lyfe a day,
Yet through his brocage and his great practise:
Beareth him selfe so, that he dareth say,
The lawe shal end right as he doth deuise.

And layth, he hath to muche abused you,
And thus and thus he pleadeth all the case:
Telleth what action must be brought, and how,
All for a matter worth a quater ase.

They

They neuer wyll geue councell to submit,
That were humilitie, that were to vyle:
Nor to our estimation dooth sitt,
Untyl our purse haue had the lar a whyle.

And then our neighbours may our matter end,
Though worse then vs was offered before:
And reason good we may no longer spend,
Thus many a wylfull man his thrift hath lore.

And for it hath bẽn laughed well to scorne,
By flatterers that han vpon him fed:
And filled their bodes with good strong ale in corne,
For which his purse full hartily hath bled.

This would not chaunce so oft yf lowlynes,
Were halfe estæmed as she ought to be:
Nor such extremities sought of redresse,
For with discresion procedeth she.

And oft with sufferaunce doth ouercome,
Leauing reuenge to hym that wyl and shall:
Reuenge the wrongs that to thẽ inst are done,
And bring full lowe their Cedars high and tall.

And so much for my prayse that lowlinesse,
Begetteth concord, and dooth nourishe peace:
Which twayne who is so leude but wyll confesse,
They bẽn the cause of wealth & of encrease.

And are of Towne and Countrey such defence,
As is no Bulwarke, ne Munition:
Agaynst the foe to maken resistence,
As hath ben proued yeeres and dayes agon.

For God who may not lye hath promised,
Where brethren dwell together as in loue:
With lyfe and blessinges to be cherished,
They may not faile, & that from heauen aboue.

To proue this matter of itselfe so plaine,
We needeth bring no more authoritie:
Ne what the fathers of such matters sayen,
Experience doth it so ratifye:

Wherefore to turne agayne to lowlines,
The matter of my woorke, and for whose sake:
To trauell in so great a busines,
So bygh and worthy I haue vndertake.

I say she hath such multiplicitie,
Of fauour and of grace especiall:
That I dare call her of humanitie,
The note, the proofe, and iudgement principall.

Whereby a man doth differ from a beast,
For one hath wylful inclination:
And reason none of deede, ne of behest,
But violence of sense and passion.

Of whom God by his prophete Dauid sayeth,
Be not (sayth he) lyke vnto Horse or Mule:
That more his wyl, then any reason wayeth,
And must with bitte and brydle lime in rule.

Whereas the soule of man is reasonable,
And of his lust and wyll hath gouernaunce:
But yf he abuse that gyft inestimable,
Which to the lowly hart doth sildome chaunce.

For once he semeth small in his owne eyes,
Of godly minde a mighty argument:
And of a man whom litle may suffise,
Both worthy of great prayse in myne entent.

For be it much or lit that he possesseth,
Of land or fee, of siluer or of golde:
His hart encreaseth not thereby, ne lesseth,
As eooon these fooles, for they han gotten molde.

What some by legacie, some by discent,
Bytitle auncestrel and cosinage:
Some, for in all their lyfe no trueth they ment,
But vsure bribyng, and such foule outrage.

And so haue filled cupbord, chest, and coffer,
For which hem thinketh they should ben aboue:
And that ech wyght to them shculd dowke & proffer,
All for theyr wealth, and nothing for their loue.

For lone dooth nothing for their purpose make,
That seeken worldly pompe and maintenaunce:
Not asking question for conscience sake,
In bargayne, purchase, or in cheuisaunce.

Of word, of yard, of measure, ne of weight,
Of thirtie for a hundred by the yeere:
Not plainely tocke, but closely and by sleight,
Aske of the Brokers howe, and ye shall heare.

Yet for they breake no house by violence,
Nor by the high wayes in await do lye:
But robbe at home withouten resistence,
No man agaynst them dare make hue and cry.

But yf the godly preacher lyght thereon,
Who for his words are spoken vnto all:
Tushe good ynough say they be named non,
And so from euill vnto woorse they fall.

For these are statutes made and ordinaunce,
To bridle their vnsaciablenesse:
That make the fatherlesse and wydow daunce,
With hungry bellies through their cursednesse.

Not for the other sakely dare I say,
Who standeth of his God in such an awe:
And by his word so ordereth his way.
That he is to him selfe a perfect lawe.

Thinketh

Thinketh of God, and that before his eyes,
He goeth, and that to him there is no night:
Wayeth also that what so men deuise,
How so they colloure their dædes with slight.

They may not him deceiue ne bleare his eye,
As they can do to men by diuerse wayes:
Auoyding lawes their paine and penaltie,
Yea and of wisedome thereby get the praise.

If all these things come of humilitie,
Why may I not conclude vpon her then:
And say no man can praise her worthely,
Ne shew what good she doth the sonnes of men.

But for my synall proofe this will I say,
That read the bookes of kings and ye shall finde:
How God accepted lowlines alway.
And made the proud and hautie come behinde.

And them despised though with sacrifice,
And many a ceremony they him sought:
Which (as appeareth well) he did dispise,
For that so well they of them selues thought.

Ye sayd saith he to smyten with your fist,
And to your debters done oppression:
Your harts to meeke and humble ye rest,
Yet shame ye not to make profession.

Of sacrifice and of religion,
With solempne outward ceremony:
Hypocrisie and mere derision,
Where in the hart is not humility.

Shortly the humble, lowe, and contrite hart,
Sayth Dauid, is to God most acceptable:
That wyll I offer (sayth he) for my part,
And Bullockes of my lippes lay on thy table.

Wherein almighty God vs graunt that we,
By his example, and a number mo:
Enforsen vs, such as he was to be,
Encreas and blesse all them that wyshen so.

That eche man seking others, not his owne,
In pacience, and longanimitie:
Of lyke may make his callyng to be knowen,
And wynne the weake, to praysen God thereby.

Through stedfastnesse and trueth in word & deede,
Abhorring filthy gayne, and all excesse:
Supportyng eche another in his neede,
Accomptyng godly lining great richesse.

Shortly subduing lust and lewde desyre,
Of sport or speeche, and fleshes foule delite:
May so put out of wickednesse the fyre,
And growe in fruites and graces of the spirite.

And

And thus much of this vertue haue I said,
Of duetie bound and eke most willingly:
The rather for pride hath her sore affraid:
And bosteth he will putten out her eye.

Which God of his pure grace sheild and defend,
And blesse his people and inheritance:
To him be laud and praise world without end,
And of all creatures obeysance.

The Booke to the Reader.

F, gentle Reader, thou haue found in me.
Thing which thy stomake hardly can disgest.
Here is discribed an Epythyme,
Tarme it and lappe it close vnto thy brest,

Was compounded with great diligence,
Of Symples by an Apothecary,
Oth trustie and skilfull in that Science,
And from these iiii. verses doth not vary.

The Epythyme.

Who purposeth to liuen vertuouse,
In fauour of our God, let him take kéepe,
That pride none office beare within his house,
For where he doth vertue is layde to slæpe.

A Prayer to almightie God.

LOrd God through whose eternall ordinance,
Decreed is and set downe by statute:
That human life shall stand of sustenance,
And must for want thereof be resolute.

Into the matter whereout he was take,
Which was the earth and therfore hast him giue,
In token of thy loue and for his sake,
All necessary things wheron to liue.

Both for his pleasure and necessitie,
To number them and make diuision:
The first I may not for infinitie,
But to the last belongen three and one.

Which are apparel, meat, and drinke and sleepe,
Whereof the last three ben so necessary:
That who so lacketh them no life may keepe,
The fourth to hide our shame thou will we cary.

These for our life we holden sufficiaunt,
For these we make shift and prouision:
Forgetfull of the fourth and ignoraunt,
Which yet is chiefe of all and liefe allone.

Thy word (O Lord) by whom all these are led,
And through thee which they yelden nourishment:
For else man liueth not onely by bred,
By meat or drinke or other accident.

For

Nor yet by slæpe to nature so friendable,
Though of all these we taken what we will:
Yea rather for wee bæn vnmeasurable,
And vse them not for næde but to fulfill.

A foule delite and pryden vs therein,
They bæn our snares and hasten our decay:
Thy iust reward (O Lord) alas for sinne,
When we by them are led forth of thy way.

Graunt vs therfore (O Lord) that we so vse,
Thy Creatures as may stand with thy will.
That for their sakes we do not thee refuse,
Nor turne thy giftes and goodnes to our ill.

But that aboue all other things we thirst,
Thy kingdome and of it the righteousnes,
Which thou hast bidden vs to sæken first,
So shall the rest not hurt vs through excesse.

In this life nor yet in the life to come,
Which graunt vs Lord for Jesus Christes sake:
And when in earth our part is playd and done,
Our soules and bodies to thy mercy take.

FINIS.